

OLD HAMPTON PAPERS

EARLY HAMPTON DAYS

In 1718 when the General Court began to grant privileges to Canada Parish and Windham Village, now known as Hampton and Hampton Hill, they granted them privilege to build a Pound, providing they would do so "at their own expense," and build it on the "Great Street near the Meeting House." And as the Pound is still standing with its walls firm and enduring as ever, in one corner of the farm of Joseph Burchnell, whose land lies a few rods west from the north end street on Hampton Hill today, we must conclude that the Great Street of that day and the Meeting House were farther to the West than at the present time, and on what is now called a back road.

Robert Moulton was appointed the first Pound Keeper and brander but he was obliged to furnish his own branding irons. It covers a plot of ground perhaps fifty foot square. A gateway at the North is the only entrance. Ebenezer Jewett, remembers when a boy, that a heavy gate closed its entrance, fastened with a stout chain and padlock. Mr. Burchnell occupies what was known as the Wild Homestead, perhaps the only house left standing of the ancient Windham Village.

As related in another paper the second Pastor of the Church was Samuel Mosely, the famous Priest Mosely, who married the widow of the first Pastor, Mr. Billings. He was Pastor for 37 years, living to see the incorporation of the new town as Hampton in 1788. Failing health at last prevented him from preaching and his pulpit was supplied by other ministers, although he remained as its Pastor, until his death July 26, 1791 in his 83rd year.

Ludovicus Wild of Brainree was chosen to be the third Pastor. He was called one of Windham's foremost Ministers "Being especially notable for his skill in producing sermons." He purchased land and erected a fine farm house where he lived for 32 years as Pastor of the Church, resigning at last on account of ill health.

Hampton was progressing finely. The settlers had prospered and abandoned their first log cabins had built homes elsewhere, settling on what is now Hampton Hill and elsewhere throughout the town. Bridges had been built, new roads laid out; farming improved and cattle imported. The old roads became mere lanes with the passing of the years.

Mr. Wild seemed to understand how to get the good will of his people; for tradition tells us that when the kindly blizzards would fill the highways with snow the sturdy shovellers would work their way through the drifts as far as the Parson's when he would come out with great pitchers of cider and treat the men. There is still a closet in the Wild Homestead, where it said the good Parson kept his wines. But as everyone else did the same he was not condemned, "which shows the Temperance spirit of those days."

Another story illustrating those days is of a lady who with a young child in her arms, was driving across Lake Champlain with a noted Clergyman on a bitter winter's day. Before crossing the ice he stopped at a tavern and brought her out a glass of hot toddy and water insisting that she drink it, as she would freeze without it. She replied that if she froze she would freeze sober. Years after she attended a Temperance lecture and was astonished to hear the same minister advocating strict temperance. He told

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the story adding that the sight of the frail little woman refusing a "warmer" on a bitter midwinter day, had made a Temperance man of him.

When the new Church was built it was under the supervision of Thomas Steadman Jr. who although scarce twenty years old had already become noted for his skill and good judgment, in "carpentering." His brother James Steadman was a good farmer, a carpenter and joiner, and also manufacturer. "Stout wooden clocks that kept good time." There is a relic of one of these clocks still preserved in the Bennett Homestead. It was these clocks which Mr. Bennett used to peddle from Connecticut to Virginia.

When the Church was built the Society ordered that it should be "Colored like the Church in Pomfret," but there is no record that Steadman was the "colorer."

Daniel G. Sprague of Killingly who was installed in 1824. Ebenezer Jewett was a member of him. He recalls seeing him come out of his house which he occupied as Parsonage and exclaiming: "I'd swing my hat three times to see that old shell burn down. It is full of bedbugs, they drive me out of the house."

"That's so," exclaimed the indignant owner. "That's so," said Elder Sprague. They are all married and got families. He was an earnest Temperance worker and took great interest in the Washingtonian movement then at its height. It was through his interest that Hampton became a Temperance town, a position it has since maintained.

There was, at times, besides the Congregational Church, a Baptist Church in the N. E. part of the town. The old Grow Meeting House near the present home of Henry Stone. A small

building for Christians in the western part of the town then called Goshen, but now Clark's Corners.

About 1724 a full Military Company was organized with Stephen Howard, Captain, Nathaniel Kingsbury, Lieutenant and Samuel Gardner Ensign, with 60 privates between the ages of 16 and 60. Schools were provided for selectmen and other officers appointed, and the inhabitants accommodated in every way. They attended Town Meeting in Windham Green; followed the Nipmuck path to Norwich and to New London and the Greenwich path to Providence for supplies.

A sister of Thomas Steadman, the builder of the Church, married Dr. Joseph Chaplin and settled in Windham Village in 1755. Dr. John Brewster settled here about the same time and became very prominent in Church and town affairs. John and William Durkee and their descendants were

also very prominent and leading men.

When Mr. Wild was Pastor, Sergeant Abijah Fuller who fought at Bunker Hill and Ticonderoga, and Isaac Bennett, also a veteran, were Deacons. Deacon Fuller was called as zealous in fighting as he was in prayer and the remarks concerning him are still recalled by Mr. Jewett. "He can fight like old Big Fuller" was a compliment current in the town when praising anyone's bravery.

In 1830 the first mill was opened in Hampton. There were about 30 dwellings on the street, five shores, and a townhouse, a tavern, blacksmith shop, harness shop, and Dr. Brewster had a drug store. Joseph S. Curtis had silver works and manufactured between 2000 and 3000 pair of spectacles yearly. In Howards Valley were a woolen mill and cotton factory; the ruins of which and the dismantled tenement house

may be seen there yet.

SUSAN JEWETT HOWE

Grape Juice Diplomacy.

Mexican refugees of prominence continue to take refuge under the Stars and Stripes, thus testifying to the excellent flavor of our grape-juice diplomacy.—Chicago News.

Explanations Not Needed.

Now that Connie Mack has explained how he won the pennant, it will be unnecessary for Muggsy McGraw to tell how he didn't.—Washington Post.

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